

and leave it to the next generation to pick up the bill.”

Madam Speaker, before closing, as I always do on the floor because my heart aches for those who have given their lives in Afghanistan and Iraq and those who have been wounded, I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform. I ask God to please bless the families of our men and women in uniform. I ask God in His loving arms to hold the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. And I ask God to please bless the House and Senate, that we would do what is right in the eyes of God. And I ask God to give strength, wisdom, and courage to the President of the United States that he will do what is right in the eyes of God for this country.

I close three times by asking God please, God please, God please continue to bless America.

[From the Washington Post, Nov. 13, 2009]

HALF DONE ON HEALTH REFORM

(By David S. Broder)

While House Democrats spent the week congratulating themselves for squeezing out the midnight passage of their version of health-care reform, neutral observers were reminding them: You’ve left the job half done.

Having watched Hillary and Bill Clinton try and fail even to bring their version of health reform to a vote, I can certainly join in saluting Speaker Nancy Pelosi, her leadership team and the Obama White House for maneuvering the 1,990-page behemoth to harbor.

But, as many sympathetic voices have been telling them: Unless you find more realistic ways of paying for the promises included in the bill, you are simply setting up the public for more frustration—and yourselves for a political backlash.

At least a dozen health and budget experts have filled the Web and the airwaves with warnings that the House bill simply postpones the cost controls needed to finance the vast expansion of insurance coverage and Medicaid benefits envisaged by its sponsors.

One of them speaks with special authority: David Walker, the former head of the Government Accountability Office—the auditing and investigative arm of Congress—told me in an interview on Wednesday that the lawmakers are “punting on the tough choices, rather than making sure they can deliver on the promises they’re making.”

In a speech delivered less than 48 hours after the House acted, Walker, now president of the Peter G. Peterson Foundation, laid out the tests that buttress his conclusion.

Acknowledging that “clearly, we need radical reconstructive surgery to make our health-care system effective, affordable and sustainable,” Walker cautioned that “what we should not do is merely tack new programs onto a system that is fundamentally flawed”—and rapidly driving the national budget into ruin.

He proposes a four-part test of fiscal responsibility for any health reform plan: “First, the reform should pay for itself over 10 years. Second, it should not add to deficits beyond 10 years. Third, it should significantly reduce the tens of trillions of dollars in unfunded health promises that we already have. Fourth, it should bend down—not up—the total health-care cost curve as a percentage of” gross domestic product.

An analysis by the Lewin Group shows that the Energy and Commerce Committee

bill that was the basic blueprint for the House measure comes close to meeting the first of those tests and fails the other three, according to Walker, “by a wide margin.”

A separate Lewin Group study of the Finance Committee bill from which Majority Leader Harry Reid is working on the Senate legislation shows it is almost as much of a fiscal failure. It fails the fourth test, falls short on the third, and passes the first two only by assuming that future Congresses will force reductions in reimbursements to doctors and hospitals that lawmakers in the past have refused to impose.

Walker, a close observer and former employee of Congress, calls that assumption “totally unrealistic.”

In reading his analysis—and the comments of the many others who have appraised the House’s handiwork—it becomes clear that unless something intervenes, Congress is headed toward repeating a familiar pattern. Just as it did under Republican control in the George W. Bush years, when it passed but did not pay for a Medicare prescription drug benefit, it is about to hand out the goodies and leave it to the next generation to pick up the bill.

The Senate could still reduce the damage. If it began to move away from the fee-for-service payment system that rewards doctors and hospitals on the quantity of procedures they perform, rather than on the results of the treatment, that would help. If it reduced the biggest single loophole in the revenue system—the tax-exempt status of employer-provided health benefits—that would help a lot.

Otherwise, while congratulating one another for an overdue piece of social legislation, lawmakers could end up condemning our children to a far worse financial future than they deserve.

A TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT CHARLES MAGGART

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to pay the long overdue respects of a grateful Nation to First Lieutenant Charles L. Maggart from Marion, Indiana, who fell serving his country in the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II.

Charles Maggart was born in November of 1919 and attended Marion High School in Indiana, where he was an honor student as well as a football and basketball star. In fact, his outstanding athletic ability earned him scholarship offers in 1938 from both Indiana University and the University of New Mexico. Charles chose the University of New Mexico. However, with the clouds of war looming over Europe, Charles returned to Indiana to attend Marion College, today Indiana Wesleyan University, where he took flying lessons.

In April of 1941, Charles applied for and was accepted into the Army Air Force. Upon completing basic flight training at Parks Air College in St. Louis and Randolph Air Field in San Antonio, Texas, Charles was assigned to Ellington Field in Houston, Texas, for advanced flight training.

On December 12, 1941, just 5 days after the bombing of Pearl Harbor,

Charles Maggart, until then a sergeant major of cadets, earned his pilot’s wings and his lieutenant’s bars. He also married his wife, then First Lieutenant Yolanda Federico. The next day he departed for Morrison Field, Florida, for assignment to the 49th Pursuit Group, Ninth Pursuit Squadron; but he was fairly quickly reassigned from fighters to bombers, ending up with the 405th Bombardment Squadron, 38th Bomb Group, Fifth Air Force 38th flying out of Australia.

□ 1945

The group shipped out from California for Australia in April of 1942. On December 5, 1942, Lieutenant Charles Maggart’s war came to an end. Flying a B-25 bomber known as the “Happy Legend,” Lieutenant Maggart and his six-man crew set off to bomb Lae, a critical point along the northeastern coast of Papua, New Guinea. Lieutenant Maggart and his crew were shot down by the Japanese over the Owen Stanley Mountains. In January of 1943, Lieutenant Maggart’s wife and family were informed by the War Department that he was missing in action.

Lieutenant Maggart’s mother, waiting patiently, had reservations about his fate. After repeated letters to the War Department, in 1947 she was told that the aircraft and crew were never recovered and were probably lost at sea. It wasn’t until 1949 that Lieutenant Maggart and his crew was officially declared killed in action. Although a team of Australians reportedly reached the crash site in 1943, the area was still overrun with Japanese units, and little could be done to document the remains of the aircraft and crew. Except for the determination of Charles’ brother, Phil Maggart, and the families of the other crewmembers of the “Happy Legend,” that might be the end of the story.

Phil Maggart last saw his brother Charles in October of 1941, and for more than six decades, Phil has tried to find his brother and to bring him home. Working through government bureaucrats and private contacts even when he was serving with the U.S. Air Force around the world, including a tour of duty flying search-and-rescue missions in Vietnam, Phil never gave up asking questions, and ultimately he found answers. Thanks to the persistence of Phil Maggart, Lieutenant Charles Maggart has finally come home. And tomorrow, Tuesday, November 17, 2009, Lieutenant Charles Maggart and his crew will be interred together at Arlington National Cemetery, a fitting place of honor for true American heroes.

Madam Speaker, I respectfully ask that all of my colleagues join me in saluting Lieutenant Maggart and his valiant crew. God bless you, gentlemen, and thank you for your service to America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. ING-LIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.